

going to have to do one or the other. You're going to have to give up your music or you're going to go back to being poor,' I would go poor, totally broke, and start over and do my music. That's how much I love it."

On behalf of all Tennesseans, I thank you, Dolly, for giving so much of yourself to us. The world is a better and richer place because of your music, and we love you for it.

TRIBUTE TO GUNNERY SERGEANT MARTIN ALEMAN

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, December is always a time of transitions here on Capitol Hill, and it is time for Team Blackburn to recognize the transition of our defense fellow, GySgt Martin Aleman, away from the Senate and toward a bright future rising in the ranks of the Marine Corps.

On the Armed Services Committee, we spend a great deal of time considering how the decisions we make in this building will affect budgets and workload and our overall national security; but paramount to me is the effect it will have on servicemembers and their families at home and abroad.

Since day one of his fellowship, Martin has been a bottomless well of information about what it is like to actually serve in the military. His stories from his service—sometimes entertaining, sometimes sobering—helped us remember that when all is said and done, each line item in a bill, dollar authorized, and penny spent will change the lives of the brave men and women who put on the uniform.

Martin, we will miss you, but I am sure Casandra is more than ready to reclaim the time our hectic schedule stole from you this past year. I wish you the best of luck as you take the next step in your already impressive career.

TRIBUTE TO MASTER SERGEANT JUSTIN KRONENBERG

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, I would like to recognize and thank Justin Kronenberg, my 2022 Department of Defense legislative fellow, for all of his hard work and dedication to my office. He is an active duty master sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps with almost two decades of service. The wealth of knowledge and professionalism he brought have been incredibly valuable.

Throughout the year, Justin's expertise supported me in my role as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and particularly as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Seapower. He is a skilled communicator, which has been instrumental in distilling and explaining many of the complex policy matters before the committee. North Dakota had the privilege of hosting Justin for a week as he toured our military facilities, seeing firsthand the great work being done in Grand Forks, Minot, and Fargo. North Dakota and my office are better off thanks to Justin's service.

I would also like to thank Justin's family for the shared sacrifice and service they give this Nation. I wish Justin all the best at his next assignment and in all his future endeavors. Semper Fi.

TRIBUTE TO SRDJAN SIMUNOVIC

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, this month, Team Blackburn is saying goodbye to Srdjan Simunovic, who has spent 2 years with us as part of a fellowship program between my office and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which is just outside of Knoxville, TN.

Most staff here on Capitol Hill dabble in politics. Even our most dedicated policy staff tend to have ambitions that extend beyond their chosen portfolio, but the position of Oak Ridge fellow is special in that it attracts people whose expertise transcends politics.

It has been such a pleasure working with Srdjan over the past 2 years and watching him open my team's eyes to the truly marvelous things Tennesseans are doing at Oak Ridge. We will miss him tremendously, but I know his wife Marina and son Thomas will be grateful to have him home full time.

Srdjan, thank you for giving 2 years of your life to Team Blackburn. We wish you all the best with what comes next.

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN BOYD

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I want to honor a great public servant and Alabamian, my first chief of staff, Stephen Boyd. After nearly two decades of public service, we recently said goodbye to this integral part of our team. When you run for Congress, you learn that people are quick to give you advice—especially when you have had a lifelong career outside of politics. One tip I heard over and over was "hire a good chief of staff."

I assembled a lot of teams as a coach. I could easily tell you what makes a "good" offensive coordinator or a "good" defensive coordinator. But when I thought about what would make a "good" chief of staff, I decided I needed someone with three main qualifications: one, someone who knew the Federal Government; two, someone who knew Alabama; and three, someone who would lead with integrity. There were a lot of people who fit the first two qualifications, but the third qualification, integrity, was the most important to me. I was looking for someone who didn't just have the knowledge or skills required to oversee a Senate office and advise a Senator who was new to politics. I was looking for someone who wanted to do the right thing for the people we represent, someone who puts the service of others first. And that someone was Stephen Boyd.

To simply say Stephen was born to serve and born to lead would be accu-

rate. Stephen's grandfathers and father served in the military, and his family is dedicated to their community—but it would not tell the full picture. Stephen has purposefully led a life dedicated to constant learning so that he could be a better servant of others. A native of Birmingham, Stephen received his undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama. He used his God-given talents throughout his time in college to lead in many roles, including as president of university programs. Just last year, Stephen was awarded the University's Bert Bank Distinguished Service and Achievement Award, one of school's highest alumni honors. He went on to earn a law degree at Alabama, and upon graduation, Stephen felt a calling to serve—and headed to Washington, DC, to work for then-Senator Jeff Sessions from Alabama. During his time in Senator Sessions' office, Stephen held positions of increasing responsibility and served at times in policy and communications roles.

He quickly earned a reputation for being able to digest complex policy details and tell the story of the office's work in a way that resonated with Alabamians back home. This is where Stephen began to fully understand the responsibility that all of our offices have to keep our constituents informed. While Senator Sessions served on the Judiciary Committee, Stephen led the Senator's communications through some of the most crucial moments in the Senate: Supreme Court nominations and confirmations. It was also during this time that Stephen met Martha Roby. At the time, Martha was an attorney in Montgomery running for the U.S. House in an extremely competitive district. Senator Sessions asked Stephen to serve his State by going home and making sure Martha became Congresswoman Roby. Stephen, of course, agreed. He ran a campaign in what turned out to be the most expensive election in the district's history, and Martha Roby would go on to serve in the House for a decade. After helping her earn her place in Congress, Congresswoman Roby naturally asked Stephen to help build her office in DC as her chief of staff.

Again, he stepped up. It was a new challenge to start an office from scratch, but Stephen is always willing to put in the effort to find solutions. That is one of the things that stands out most about Stephen: his devotion to learning. He learns the details of institutions he works for, the Members he works for, and the constituents he works for, all in order to ensure he is consistently meeting their needs. He learned quickly how important the role of oversight is for Congress. And through all of his roles so far, he has maintained a great respect for the power of congressional oversight and what it means for the American people. In Martha Roby's office, Stephen led his team to investigate the care provided by Department of Veterans Affairs to Alabama's veterans. Under his

leadership, Stephen and I led his colleagues conducted a months-long effort to expose mismanaged care of our veterans and a scheme at some VA facilities to falsely report wait times, covering up the fact that veterans were waiting months for delayed care. The investigation resulted in top leadership changes and disciplinary action against multiple VA administrators and an audit to weed out those who were lying about the treatment of our country's veterans. That commitment to finding and exposing the truth was an invaluable quality when Stephen was asked to combine his experience on the Hill with his law degree and serve at the U.S. Department of Justice.

When President Trump tapped Senator Sessions to be his Attorney General, Stephen was appointed and confirmed by the Senate as the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legislative Affairs. This achievement, which very few people can claim, was the culmination of over a decade of thoughtful service and leadership—built on a deep understanding of how Congress works. In this role, Stephen expertly managed the Department of Justice's relationship with Congress through often-contentious periods. He oversaw the Department's response to countless oversight investigations, congressional and confirmation hearings, and even several congressional subpoenas.

Every Senator relies on their staffs, and I had to build one from the ground up. This was a difficult task, but I knew with Stephen Boyd at the helm, he would ensure we got the right people in the right places. A devoted Washington Nationals Fan, Stephen describes a Senate office like a baseball team. It takes everyone collectively executing their individual jobs to win the game. And Stephen made sure each member of our staff had what they need to execute their role on our team. Deliberate, decisive, and always fair, that is how our staff describes Stephen. He kept the team calm, but motivated. He never notched today's win at the expense of tomorrow's victory. There was always a new solution to consider to a problem, and tough situations tended to look better in the next morning's light.

From the very first day, Stephen instilled a culture of integrity, inspiring our team to maintain a focus on doing what is right on behalf of the people of Alabama. The only "thanks" he worried about getting was a thank you from a constituent whose life we made a little better by helping them. For these first 2 years of my term—arguably the most formative years—Stephen was at the center of every decision and every action we have taken on behalf of the State of Alabama. And one singular question was his guiding light: "Is it good for the people of Alabama?"

This was especially true when it comes to our office's work on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Ste-

phen traveled around the State, the country, and the world to see our military in action. He focused on how we can use our position on the Armed Services Committee to support the military footprint in Alabama and our men and women in uniform. Stephen pushed us to take a listen-first approach—to ask our military leaders what they need and to actually listen to those requests. Thanks to his leadership, we secured authorization of funding for a number of projects important for the future of our national defense capabilities. Some of these include: new barracks at Ft. Rucker, missile defense projects, the construction of more ships in Mobile, a new physics lab at Redstone Arsenal, and a new commercial vehicle inspection area at Maxwell Air Force Base. And we even secured the No. 1 request from our No. 1 commander in the Indo-Pacific region that had gone ignored for years: a missile defense system for Guam.

Stephen was also a great support as Huntsville readies to become Space Command's home in the next few years. He led the staffs of the Alabama congressional delegation to have a united front in supporting this transition and ensured our office maintains near-constant communication with the Huntsville community and defense industry to ensure a smooth transition. Once again, Stephen's approach to work—ask first, work diligently behind the scenes, and do what is right for the people—was an effective way to get things done. These are just a few examples of how Stephen's leadership had external success.

But what people won't see are the daily moments of impact he had on our office. Stephen was a trusted and reliable adviser. You ask a question, and he will shoot you straight, even if you don't like the answer. And for me, his trustworthiness and transparency were invaluable these past 2 years. He worked to ensure I had all the information, from all sides of the argument, in order to make a final decision. And at the end of the day, Stephen always had the people of Alabama in mind.

Stephen didn't spend the last two decades of his career trying to gain acclaim. He quietly worked in the background to help improve the lives of Alabamians. And I have no doubt he will continue with that sense of service in his next endeavors.

Our office will greatly miss his steady hand and calm leadership. But we know public service is not just a burden of time and effort borne by the servant. I also want to thank Stephen's wife, Breckie, for her constant support.

So, Stephen, thank you for your service to our office, the State of Alabama, and to our country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MARK GORDON

• Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I rise today to recognize my good friend,

Mark Gordon, who will be retiring from his position as the president of the Missouri Broadcasters Association next year after almost a decade of distinguished service. Mark has been a broadcaster for over 40 years. He started his career as a copywriter and an announcer before moving on to being a newscaster and then switching to the advertising sales side of the business. Before agreeing to helm the MBA, Mark spent 10 years running television stations in Springfield, MS, my home town, which is where we first met each other.

Mark moved to Springfield to work for KY3 in 1997, shortly after I came to Congress. In a lot of ways, our professional careers have been intertwined ever since. He has been a tireless advocate for local Missouri communities and Missouri broadcast stations and has been a trusted voice on their behalf for as long as I have known him. Whether we were working together on spectrum issues, satellite television re-authorizations, or public service campaigns, Mark has always been a person I could rely on. And between seeing him back home in Missouri at one of his members' stations or on one of his numerous visits here to Washington, DC, I have always appreciated his advice and how he always worked on behalf of the communities we both serve.

I remember the meeting in my office almost 10 years ago where Mark and his predecessor, Don Hicks, let me know that Mark would be taking over the reins of the MBA. Don Hicks had served as the head of the Missouri Broadcasters for decades and left large shoes to fill. I can honestly say that Mark not only filled those shoes but also has left his own legacy on our home State and a high bar for whoever succeeds him.

Mark's proud legacy also lives on through his son Mike, who has made significant contributions in his own right to Springfield's broadcasting industry.

I wish Mark, his wife Lucy, their children Jaime and Mike, and their entire family nothing but success in this next chapter of his life. Forty years is a long time, and he has seen, and been part of, so much change in his industry. I am proud to have been able to call him my friend for the last 25 years, and I know that whatever he decides to do next he will continue to be a tremendous asset to his community and our State.●

RECOGNIZING THE HILLIARD ART MUSEUM

• Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate the Hilliard Art Museum on being awarded accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums. This accreditation offers an industry stamp of approval to the museum, recognizing the hard work of the Hilliard Art Museum team and the support of the Lafayette community.